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DEPRESSION AND FIELD DEPENDENCE

A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy in Psychology
at Massey University.

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ABSTRACT

A psychophysiological analysis of the development of psychological differentiation is presented and compared with the psychophysiological state of self-actualization. The psychological state associated with self-actualization is presented as the baseline for measuring all human behaviour.

The analysis of psychological differentiation suggests that both ends of this continuum represent a deviation from the baseline of the self-actualized state. It is suggested that one of the possible consequences of this deviation is the pathological state of depression. Thirty-one depressed patients from three hospitals were examined using a battery of tests which produced a number of significant correlations. The most important of these was that a significant difference existed between field-dependent and field-independent patients on comparison with psychiatric diagnosis suggesting that field-independence is closely related to exogenous depression and field-dependence to endogenous depression.

A critical review is made of contemporary theories of depression and a new model is presented. This model suggests the people develop habitual apperceptual modes of perceiving the world and fail to recognize a change of context. Reactive depression can be accounted for by a model of a subject who habitually perceives the world as an instrumental learning context and is placed in a passive avoidance context. A therapeutic strategy is suggested for treatment of the patient which consists of altering the informational component of behaviour encouraging the motivational component.

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BETWEEN BIRTH AND DEATH,
THREE IN TEN ARE FOLLOWERS OF LIFE,
THREE IN TEN ARE FOLLOWERS OF DEATH,
AND MEN JUST PASSING FROM BIRTH TO DEATH ALSO NUMBER
THREE IN TEN.

WHY IS THIS SO?
BECAUSE THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES ON THE GROSS LEVEL.

HE WHO KNOWS HOW TO LIVE CAN WALK ABROAD
WITHOUT FEAR OF RHINOCEROS OR TIGER.
HE WILL NOT BE WOUNDED IN BATTLE.
FOR IN HIM RHINOCEROSES CAN FIND NO PLACE TO THRUST
THEIR HORN,
TIGERS NO PLACE TO USE THEIR CLAWS;
AND WEAPONS NO PLACE TO PIERCE.

WHY IS THIS SO?
BECAUSE HE HAS NO PLACE FOR DEATH TO ENTER.

LAO TZU TAO TE CHING
VERSE 50.